

# South Yuba Trail

Recreation Lands  
Acquisition  
Proposal

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**SOUTH YUBA RIVER TRAIL  
RECREATION LAND ACQUISITION PROPOSAL**

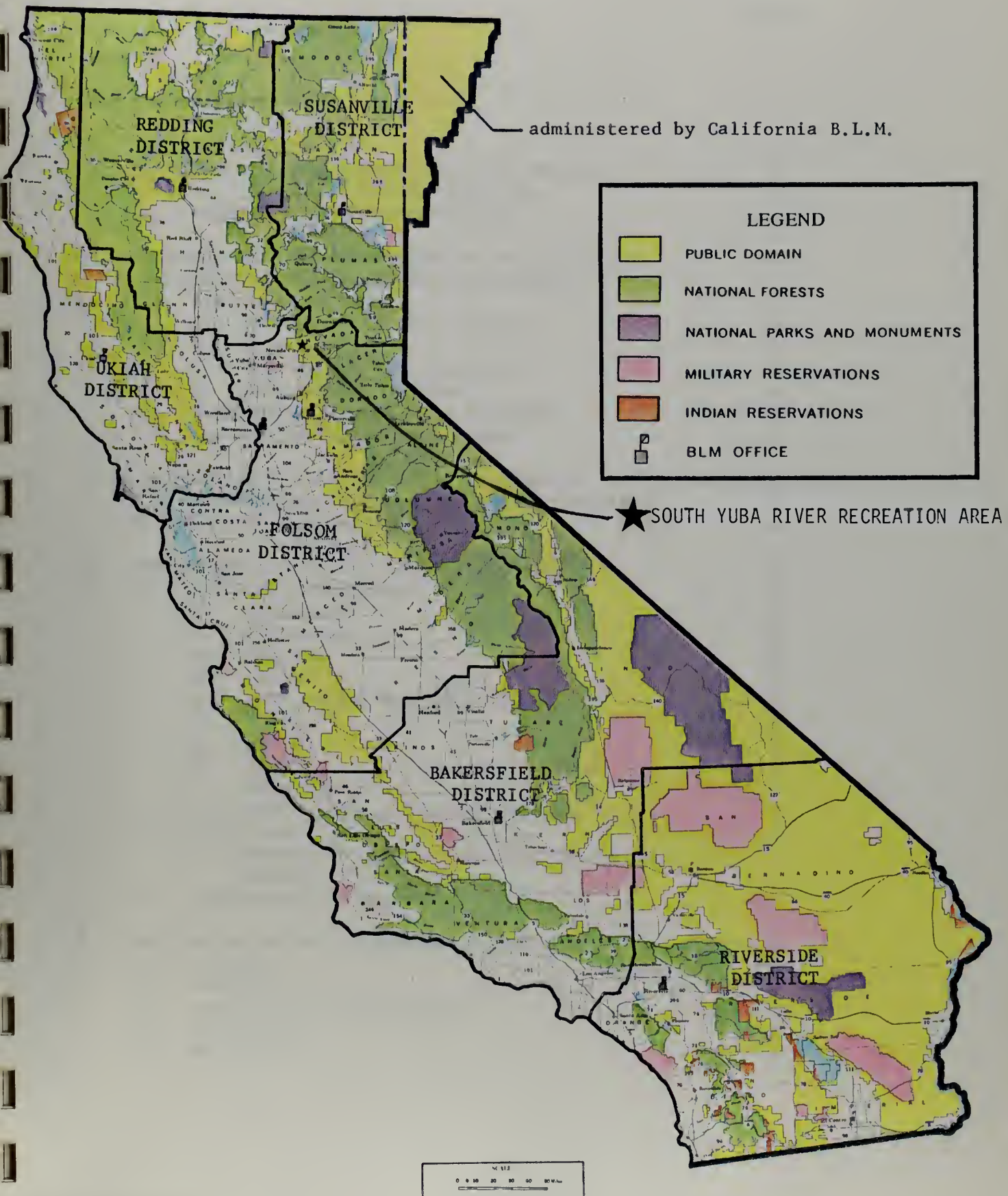
**Folsom District**

**Nevada County, California**

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# Federal Lands in California







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SOUTH YUBA RIVER TRAIL  
RECREATION LAND ACQUISITION PROPOSAL

Folsom District

Nevada County, California

Recommended for Approval:

Alan P. Thomson  
District Manager

June 15, 1978  
Date

Recommended For Approval:

\_\_\_\_\_  
State Director (BLM)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Recommended for Approval:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Regional Director (HCRS)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Approved:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director, Bureau of Land Management

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Prepared by:

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Donna K. Johnson







### South Yuba River Drainage

Looking east towards Highway 49 crossing  
in center of picture. The black line indicates  
the path of the trail/Excelsior Ditch. Just  
above line Highway 49 can be seen winding  
its way out of the valley towards Nevada  
City to the picture's right.





A. Introduction:

The South Yuba River (SYR) Recreation Lands are located 75 miles northeast of Sacramento, in Nevada County, near the communities of North Columbia and North Bloomfield in Western California (refer to map 1). The area is located within easy travel distance of Highways 20 and 49, two major tourist traveled highways. The northern entrance road to these lands is located 12 miles northeast of Nevada City off State Highway 49 and the southern entrance is located 14 miles west of Nevada City off Highway 20. The proposed lands are nestled against the administrative boundaries of Malakoff Digging State Historical Park to the north, Tahoe National Forest on the east, and Corps of Engineers' Englebright Reservoir on the west. The Bureau of Land Management's North Mother Lode Resource Area administered out of the Folsom District Office manages the majority of lands located within the proposal boundary (refer to map 1).

The proposal encompasses 13,800 acres located within the ridge lines of the South Yuba River drainage, which includes 3840 acres of private property, excluding the public from access to much of the recreational opportunities the river area has to offer.

In 1969 the BLM trail within the South Yuba River Recreational Lands was administratively designated for recreational use by the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, now HCRS, designated the SYR trail as a national recreation trail in 1970. The area receives a variety of recreational activities such as: camping, picnicking, hiking (portions of trail suitable for handicapped participation), swimming, sight-seeing, nature study, horseback riding, rockhounding, photography, gold panning, suction dredging for gold, fishing, and hunting.

B. Physical Characteristics:

1. Ecologic and Geologic Features of the Area:

The SYR area, like the Sierra Nevada Range, consists of decomposed and exposed granite which is commonplace in the river canyon.

Mineral commodities produced in the local area include asbestos, borite, copper, and gold. Much of the mineral extraction is precluded because of economic reasons but several small gold mining operations exist today in the area.

The lands which border the SYR vary in topography from gentle rolling hills to steep precipitous canyons, ranging in elevation from 600 to 3600 feet.



### Excelsior Ditch Flume

The following two pictures identify some of the land characteristics associated with the ditch and many of the opportunities identified with such a project.















Plant communities occur in three distinct vegetative zones, the grassland-oak zone up to 1500 feet, manzanita-chamise-digger pine from 1500 to 3000 feet, and conifer forest above 3000 feet. All three zones occur within the South Yuba area providing the visitor with a diversity of flora for his enjoyment.

The area supports a diverse wildlife population including deer, quail, band-tailed pigeons, squirrels, rabbits, porcupine, bobcats, coyotes, and an occasional mountain lion.

a. Scenic and Historic Attributes.

The South Yuba Recreation Area is a good example of the natural splendor of the California Mother Lode. The steep canyon walls are impressive examples of the powerful mountain building forces of the Sierra Nevada. The vegetation displays true seasonal variations and contrasts. The area is remote but accessible and serves as an outstanding landscape to public recreational enjoyment.

The BLM Recreation Lands are a part of the Gold Rush Country and are rich in examples of pioneer life and history of the gold rush period. Much has been written about the gold rush period, and at present, an ever increasing interest is being expressed to recall this past era. The Malakoff hydraulic mine pit is an impressive area that has been designated a State Park. As such, the recreational values are appreciable, and tourism now plays an increasing role in the management of these areas.

2. Recreation Attributes and Needs:

The beauty and grandeur of the river is the primary attraction in this area. The main objective of acquiring additional recreation acreage is to provide development in those areas previously excluded due to private ownership. Development plans provide for public access to the river and expansion of facilities. These additional land areas are required to provide comprehensive recreational development for public use and enjoyment.

This objective provides for expansion of the South Yuba River Trail to link up several existing access points for recreational and interpretive facilities. These areas are presently inaccessible to the public. Future plans (5-10 years) are to link the trail with a proposed US Forest Service trail to the Pacific Crest Trail. In total there will be approximately 50 miles of developed and maintained trails in the area ultimately linking the valley with the mountains and Pacific Crest Trail if the planned acquisition occurs. Specialized sections of trail will be constructed and maintained suitable for wheelchair travel for handicapped use.





C. Special or Significant Recreation Resources, Features or Opportunities of Those Lands to be Acquired.

1. Significant Attributes

The BLM has identified through its planning system that, the primary use of SYR Lands will be for recreation. Additionally, above the general dispersed recreational use on public lands, there are specific endorsements for a handicapped trail development associated with the lands being acquired.

a. Extension of South Yuba Trail

There are plans by the US Forest Service to extend the South Yuba Trail from the Forest Service Boundary, and eventually on to connect with the PCT. Since the opportunity for land acquisition is available to BLM, active planning has been ongoing to identify and propose future expansion of the trail to the West. When the full length of trail is completed by private and other resource agencies, it would become part of a proposed trail through the valley floor, up through the foothills and eventually to the Sierras. This expansion would add another link to California's settlement and developmental history including the aspects of natural and cultural history which are involved.

b. Access to River

At present, the Bureau controls access to only nine of the twenty-two miles of river frontage; of those nine miles, only two miles provide suitable access for the public because private land control access. This situation has perplexed recreation management for years. The river has no natural boundaries between ownership which has caused numerous trespass violations over private land especially in the past drought years where water based recreation has been at a premium. With the opening of several new access points the recreationist will have the opportunity to enjoy more of the river in a quality experience versus overcrowded conditions at the existing public access sites.

c. Handicapped and Hiking Trail

The handicapped individual will have the opportunity to experience a truly "natural outdoor experience". This proposal will provide an opportunity for the physically handicapped to enjoy the same opportunities as the general public. With the ever increasing numbers of handicapped persons wanting to explore and become involved with outdoor activities the potential is available for expanding the trail.



### South Yuba River

This picture was taken looking west down along the river frontage. Many other opportunities exist along with the trail and its associated activities, one being the river and its water based recreation. Many activities such as rafting, swimming, fishing, gold dredging, and sunning are all activities that are currently going on.









A segment of the Excelsior Ditch has provided an outstanding opportunity to recycle a historical facility that was abandoned and would otherwise be lost and wasted. One of the unique attributes of the ditch is its consistent grade over long distances through an area that has been virtually left in its natural state except for the immediate influence of the ditch and related facilities (access points, storage areas). Most of the immediate area surrounding the ditch is of an undeveloped nature with steep slopes and thick brush making it unsuitable for conventional development. Those areas where access and topography are suitable for home development, they will be inevitably converted to other uses precluding expansion of the trail, and the trail's immediate environment.

d. Expansion of Facilities

Many of the existing facilities (campgrounds, day use) now being utilized by the public have reached their maximum use capacity. The public has always shown a close union with the SYR influence. What the Bureau had identified for facilities directly relates to water based activities (swimming, sunbathing, tubing, rafting, gold panning, and hiking). The four campgrounds identified for development have been selected for their close proximity to the river or in the case of handicapped next to year around flowing streams that feed the river.

Other facilities such as roads, access points, overlooks, parking, and sanitation are all planned for within the next ten years in conjunction with the major campgrounds and interpretation centers developments.

The two major historically significant sites are centered around an old power generating station (one of Pacific, Gas, and Electric's first) and the facilities associated with the beginning of the Excelsior Ditch Flume. These two facilities are located on surrounding private lands and would need to be acquired to accommodate the associated activities and facilities.

2. Relationship of Lands to be Acquired

All lands proposed for acquisition will be directly related to development of facilities, provide access, or allow for BLM recreation management.



South Yuba/Excelsior Ditch Trail

This portion of the trail has been preliminarily developed by Sequoia Challenge Volunteer labor. Note the width and gentle grade allowing for ease of maneuvering by the handicapped.











### 3. Compare Recreation to Other Uses

At present, four other uses can be identified as being uses actively pursued or could be considered as being a potential threat to the recreational resource of the area. Timber, Mining, Home Development, and Grazing see paragraph E2a.

## D. Recreational Needs to be Met by the Proposal

### 1. California Outdoor Recreation Resources Plan

The South Yuba River Lands are located in the mother lode area (Nevada County) planning District 3 as indicated in the California Outdoor Recreation Resources Plan. The 1970 census showed the district to have a population of about 960,000 people.

At times during the late spring, summer, and early fall there is a heavy influx of recreationists from the Sacramento-San Francisco Bay area into this district. The impact of this nonresident recreational use on the local economy and on the natural resources and recreation facilities of the area is significant. A large portion of the vehicular traffic in this district is involved in driving for pleasure through the many historically rich and scenic areas in the Sierra foothills.

District 3 does offer many recreational opportunities that attract large numbers of residents and nonresidents.. The South Yuba River Lands attract campers, fishermen, swimmers, hikers, and sightseers. Hunting of most kinds is possible, including big game hunting in the mountains and upland game species in the foothills.

In analyzing the recreation picture for Planning District 3, consideration must be given to unsatisfied recreation demands. These needs and deficiencies fall into three categories: 1) recreation opportunities close to home; 2) regional day-use facilities; and 3) overnight use facilities. The South Yuba River Lands are concerned with all three areas.

### 2. Nevada County General Plan

The Nevada County Master Plan identifies the South Yuba River Trail area as a recreational "Special Study Corridor."

These areas have been given special emphasis in the preparation of the General Plan. Although the special study corridors extend into and through the urban areas, they are primarily in the non-urban portions of the County which are, at present, rural and highly scenic in character. However, much of the corridor area will be in demand





### Excelsior Ditch Flume

This is the first flume arrived at along the 1.7+ miles of handicapped trail identified for development by BLM. It is interesting to note that this trestle has been stabilized by volunteer help in conjunction with Sequoia Challenge. Initial estimates for reconstruction of flumes used for total handicapped trail amount to approximately \$4.7 million.









for intensive development in the future. It is this combination of scenic, rural character and intensive future use which makes it especially important that careful attention be given to development within the corridors. These areas should remain attractive for the daily benefit of the residents, many of whom were attracted to Nevada County by its scenic beauty. It is an important part of their environment. However, since these are the areas most visitors will see, preserving and enhancing the corridors so that tourists will be attracted and encouraged to stop will be of real economic benefit to the County as well.

Included in the special study corridors are historical areas, waterways, watershed areas, lakes and reservoirs, important physical features, recreation areas and roadsides. Appropriate uses include residences for permanent or part-time residents, lodges and motels for tourists, recreation facilities - public and private - and commercial uses.

All of the above mentioned special study areas are only as useful as the county development climate will allow. At present Nevada County is the fastest growing county in the state, coupled together with rapid development this would indicate a growing threat to the long-term recreation programs now being developed and implemented by Federal and State Resource agencies. Also, at present and in the foreseeable future the county has no active recreation and parks department which would preclude any county organized effort to develop and preserve recreational lands.

#### E. Bureau Management Decisions for the Area

The Bureau has over the past ten years expended over \$200,000 and 60 man-months in an effort to develop the South Yuba area into a recreational use area through the development of the South Yuba Trail Camp, a 17 unit campground, hiking trails, access points to the river and surrounding environment. The following activities have been specifically identified in the BLM's Plan for management and development.

##### 1. Recreation Management

1. Sightseeing. All modes of vehicle travel along the BLM and county road system, foot and equestrian travel along the trail system (could be utilized to promote this activity).
- b. Picnicking. Two picnic areas have been developed by BLM with additional areas being proposed for use by the visitors to the area. In addition, many informal picnic areas along the trail and river are available.



### Flume Trestles

This flume over Rush Creek is the first major flume to be reconstructed for the handicapped portion of the South Yuba Trail. Estimated cost of reconstruction and trail construction \$500,000.









- c. Camping. Seventeen designated camping facilities have been developed at the South Yuba Campground. Two primitive campsites have also been developed along the trail. No camping will be permitted except in designated campsites. Future plans call for four additional facilities for overnight use.
- d. Hiking. Use of the national recreation trail is being encouraged and extensions are continuously being developed.
- e. Recreational Handicap Trail. A five mile section of the Excelsior Ditch is to be expanded for use by the recreational handicapped.
- f. Riding. Horses are permitted along the South Yuba trail. Facilities available, at this time, are a staging area and hitching posts at the Bureau's South Yuba campground. Horsemen are asked to provide their own feed and to maintain the area upon leaving.
- g. Hunting. The California Mule Deer inhabit this area primarily during the winter months. Areas within and immediately adjacent to developed recreation sites are closed to hunting.
- h. Fishing. Stream ratings for cold water species in the area are good.
- i. Swimming. The river offers some excellent swimming holes, and the trail and road system offer some good access points to these areas.
- j. Gold Panning. This activity has recently boomed in popularity. Most of the rivers in the Sierra Nevada experience this kind of activity, and the lure of gold and wealth from the days of the gold rush has made this a popular recreation pastime.

## 2. Other Uses

- a. There should be no commercial timber cutting within boundaries of any developed recreational site and selective cutting only where absolutely necessary to eliminate hazards, prevent spread of disease or site improvement.

Housing, Development, Grazing, Timber, and Mining. All of the uses have the potential for converting the area to a use otherwise incompatible with recreation. But the imminent threat now is subdivided home development. Several land owners in the Bridgeport area are in the process of subdividing the area around Bridgeport. Unfortunately the area is one of the prime areas for recreational development.



### Trestle Disintegration

The trestle located below Jones Bar has been taken completely out by a fallen tree and erosion. Trestles in such condition and location will be relocated to an area where a standard hiking trail would be constructed.











The other uses mentioned are self-explanatory as to their inherited potential incompatibility with recreation. If timber, mining or grazing were allowed to progress in large enough volumes, certain incompatibilities could arise. Because of the above reasons, management has elected to limit uses, in such a way as to guard against any degradation of the recreational environment.

- b. As already stated in the previous section, the other uses (timber, ORV's, minerals, and grazing) will only be allowed where, when, and in such a way as not to detract from the primary use, recreation.
3. Cooperative Management. Cooperate with the State Resources Agency in preparation of studies and management plans for the river area.

F. Alternatives to the Proposed Land Acquisitions

1. Exchange. Historically as at the present time exchanges for other properties have been very difficult, costly, and unproductive. With the added regulation and procedures for exchanges imposed by FLPMA, it has been determined that many years will elapse before any new exchanges could be proposed.
2. Easement. Several preliminary attempts have been made to buy easements from the general public with no success. The general feeling is "buy us out or stay out." Several easements have been contracted with Pacific Gas and Electric and Southern Pacific Railroad.
3. Acquisition by Other Agencies/Cooperative Agreements. The initial project developed by Sequoia Challenge has been active in constructing a trail suitable for handicapped individuals. The organization, headed by John Olmsted, has elected to sell their interest in the land and trail to the State of California with the eventual easement of responsibility for development and management to the Bureau. Due to the rapid rise in land values, the private organization was unable to provide the needed funding for proper development. California Assembly Bill No. 366 appropriated \$350,000 from the Collier Park Preservation Fund to the Department of Parks and Recreation for the acquisition of specified parcels of land for the South Yuba River Trail Project. This money will be used primarily to acquire those lands associated with the development of the handicapped portion of the trail. As with many projects, cooperation and coordination between agencies has been hard to achieve, it would be to our advantage not to default on our management direction. The Bureau has wanted to develop the proposed area; however, they have not had the proper funding to carry out a project of this magnitude.
4. Local Zoning. Local zoning has taken a hard look at the proposed area and has named it as a "special study corridor" with certain general guidelines to supposedly preserve the area's integrity. This approach is very good until the bottom one liner which states, "Appropriate uses include residences for permanent and or part-time residents,



lodges and motels for tourists and recreation facilities, both public and private for commercial use." This statement virtually destroys any chance for preservation of the recreational environment. Allowance of this planning caveat will continually increase pressure to subdivide and develop. When this happens, the opportunities are lost.

5. No Action. This would allow the current landowners and subdivision developers to go ahead with plans for several complete communities of which some portions would be affected along with all areas of the river and trail.





Table 1

Population

Airline Miles	Population (Incremental) Present In 10 yrs.	Key Communities	Driving Time
0-25 miles	8,240	Grass Valley Nevada City	
26-50 miles	106,535	Auburn Roseville Yuba City Marysville Chico	
51-100 miles	702,405	Sacramento Stockton Red Bluff Susanville	
101-150 miles	2,827,605	San Francisco Oakland Modesto Redding	



Table 2

Recreation Visitation and Capacity of the Area

	Visitor Days <sup>1</sup>		PAOT <sup>2</sup>	
	<u>Public Land</u>	<u>Private Land</u> <sup>3</sup>	<u>Developed</u>	
<u>Previous</u>				
<u>Five Years</u>				
1970	4,951	N/A	See attached report on 1977 Visitor Use.	
1971	2,939	N/A		
1972	2,965	N/A		
1975	2,814	N/A		
1976	3,490	N/A		

Projected

Year 10 (with  
acquisition)

1988                      54,461

Year 10 (with-  
out acquisition)

1988                      6,980

- 1     Including dispersed use
- 2     People at one time
- 3     If available
- 4     Expected peak use



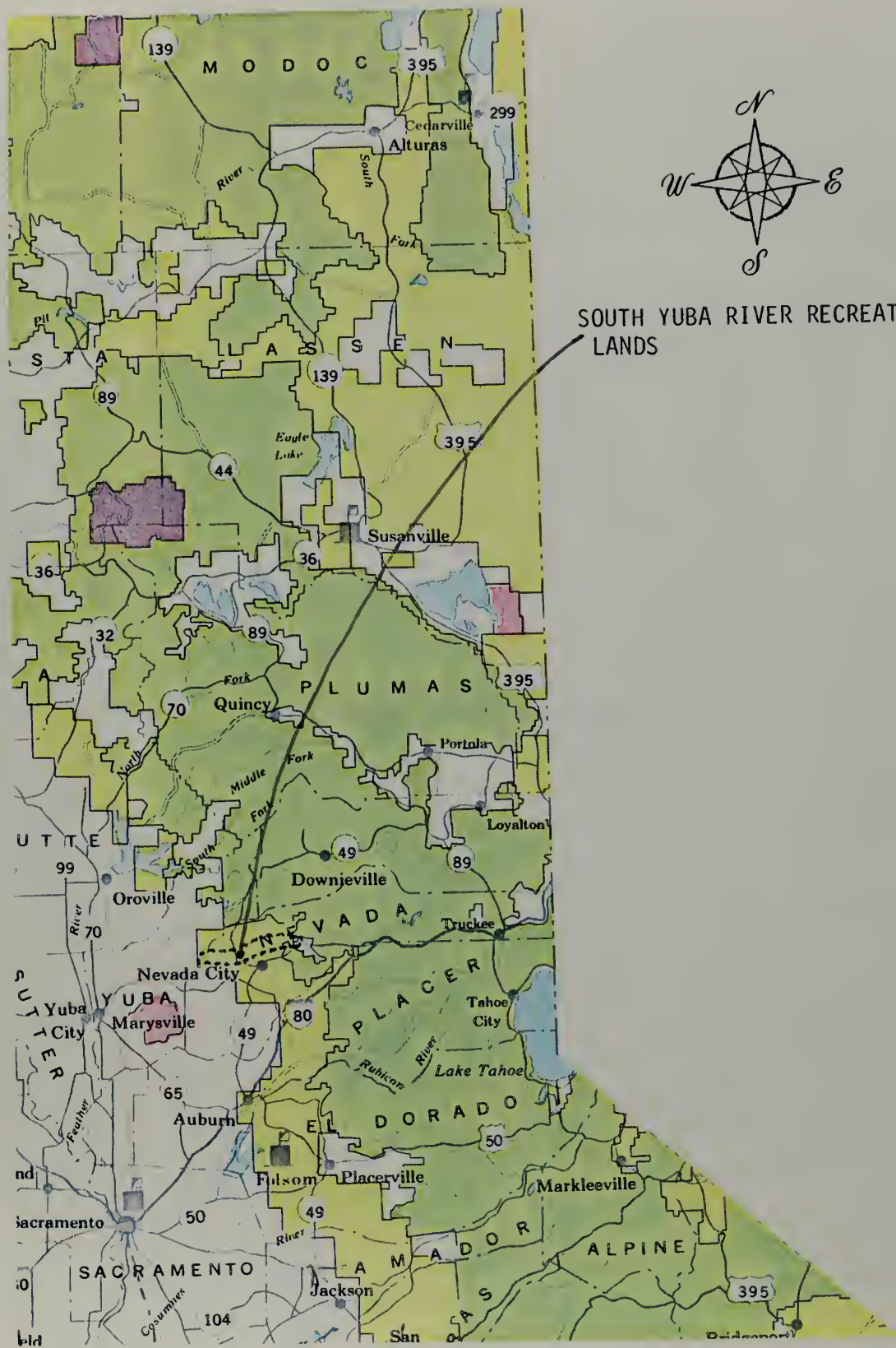
Table 3

Summary of Land Ownership and Acquisition in the Proposal Area.

Grass Acreage	13,800
Total Private	4,180
Total Non-Federal Public and Quasipublic	1,280
Total BLM Ownership	8,340
Total Land Proposed for LWCF Funding	3,840
Estimated Acquisition Cost	\$1,920,000
<u>Prior LWCF Acquisition</u>	
Cost	N/A
Acres Acquired	N/A







SOUTH YUBA RIVER RECREATION  
LANDS





	Public Lands		Existing trail
	National Forest		Proposed trail
	Malakoff Diggings State Park		Handicapped trail
	Bureau of Reclamation		Study area boundary
	Purchased by Calif. A.B. 366		Overnight campground
	Lands to be acquired (L&WCF)		Day-use area
	Lands not to be acquired (by fee)		Interpretive area

SCALE 1:48,000  
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NORTHERN MOTHER LODGE RESOURCE AREA  
FOLSOM DISTRICT  
CALIFORNIA  
**SOUTH YUBA RIVER COMPOSITE**





### Discussion of Current Management

The present management policy for the South Yuba River area was implemented primarily to prevent people from "living" for the summer or an extended period of time along the river and to prevent the problems associated with this practice which involves litter, sanitation, unauthorized structures, congestion, fire danger, etc. By designating all public lands between Purdon Crossing and the Tahoe National Forest boundary as day use except for the three designated camping areas, there is a basis for taking legal action against people trying to live along the river. Enforcement of this policy will also become easier next year when the Folsom District has a law enforcement official to carry out this function when necessary.

### Edwards Crossing Area

The vicinity of Edwards Crossing has been a problem area in past years, and the day use designation was aimed largely at preventing more problems in this area. This past summer, no significant problems occurred at Edwards Crossing and no one attempted to spend the summer there as in past years. Whether or not this was the result of the day use designation, my presence in patrolling the area, or some other factors is hard to determine; however, as long as the area is patrolled regularly and enforcement is done when necessary, then problems such as those in past years should never occur again.

The problem with people living along the river for the summer within the remainder of the designated day use area was not as serious as in past years either. Although I didn't get a chance to hike the entire length of the river between Purdon Crossing and the national forest boundary, I can say that I only know of one site on public land where people did stay for an extended period and left a mess behind. This site was discovered about halfway between Edwards Crossing and Illinois Crossing late in the summer after it was already abandoned.

Although people living along the river and at Edwards Crossing were not a problem, overnight camping in spite of the day use designation was prevalent. In fact, it would probably be safe to say that on an average weekend more people would be camped illegally along the river than would be camped legally in the South Yuba Campground and trail camps combined. The majority of these campers would park at Edwards Crossing, get out their backpacks and walk one quarter to one half mile upstream or downstream and camp for one or two nights. Camping at the parking area at Edwards Crossing was minimal and basically just involved people sleeping in their vehicles. These people were easy enough to contact, since they were right there when I drove by. Many





of them did not know about the South Yuba Campground up the road and were glad I stopped to tell them about it. Others would have been as happy to stay at Edwards Crossing as the campground, but to conform to our policy they were willing to camp at the campground and then drive back down to the river for day use activities.

The people that park at Edwards Crossing and then hike upstream or downstream to camp are more difficult to contact and provide a greater problem in enforcement. To enforce the day use policy to the letter of the law would require someone to be stationed at Edwards Crossing just about all the time or to have someone walk the entire length of the river from Purdon Crossing to the national forest boundary each day. Since overnight parking is also illegal at Edwards Crossing, vehicles parked overnight could conceivably be ticketed or at least warned. However, in my case this summer, I was not in the area every day and not there late enough in the evening to definitely determine in many cases whether a vehicle was parked overnight. Therefore, given the Folsom District's present situation in providing personnel for patrol and enforcement, strict enforcement of no overnight parking and no camping is impractical.

A more practical approach to solving the camping and parking problems is through informing and educating the public which will serve to phase out camping in the Edwards Crossing area over the next few years. Since people have been camping in the area for years, it is pretty difficult to break them of the habit suddenly. Increased patrol and public contact will help phase it out. Properly posting the area will also help. Presently Edwards Crossing is not adequately posted for no camping and no overnight parking. It would also be good if an information board or sign could be put up informing people of the campground up the road and have maps available of the area. When people's recreational activities in an area are restricted you must be able to offer them some alternatives. Presently the only alternatives in the area are to camp at the campground and drive down to Edwards Crossing for the day or to camp in one of the trail camps. Informing people of these alternatives should be done during public contact and in posting of informational signs. Keeping signs posted at Edwards Crossing is a problem also, but increased patrol can help prevent theft and vandalism.

An additional problem to enforcement occurs just downstream from Edwards Crossing because of private property along the river. This is especially true on the Eckert property just west of Spring Creek. The Eckerts live on the property themselves and allow just about anyone to camp on it and also allow some people to live on it for the summer. BLM cannot really do anything about this unless the Government acquires the property. Presently there is some problem with people using the Eckert property who park their vehicles at Edwards Crossing. A woman this summer was parking at Edwards Crossing for quite awhile, and said she was spending the summer on the Eckert property. I talked with her several times and finally she either found another place to park or left the area.



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As far as the South Yuba Campground is concerned, about the only major problem encountered this summer was the theft of water. Some of the residents in the area would come in and fill up 55 gallon drums when nobody was around as I learned from one of the campers who saw someone do it one day. In wetter years this may be less of a problem. Since the present water hydrants will be replaced with push button spigots which must be held down, wastage will be reduced and theft will become less easy. Increased patrol of the area and possibly more public relations with the local residents can help reduce this also.

Use of the campground is still relatively low. During the summer it was full on only two occasions - one night of Fourth of July weekend and one night of Labor Day weekend. As camping is phased out in the Edwards Crossing area, use of the campground could increase. There was a tendency by a few people to stay longer than the 14-day limit this summer. Since the campground was nowhere near full on these occasions, I did not hassle them about it; however, as use increases, this will have to be watched more closely.

Something else worth mentioning is the property and house bordering the west side of the campground occupied by Donna Rowe and her family. Although this might be viewed as an encroachment problem by some, she has also been helpful in looking after the campground and probably knows more about what happens in the campground than BLM. She is also willing to allow us to park Government vehicles on her property and watch after them when we hike down the trail to do work or patrol. For these reasons, it is good to stop in and talk with her once in a while to see if she knows something we should know and to maintain good relations. Although BLM may try to acquire her property some day, it is still beneficial to maintain good relations at this time.

#### South Yuba Trail and Trail Camps

The South Yuba Trail is currently in good condition and seems to be well maintained. The Nature Trail portion needs some improvement. The present nature trail booklet in combination with the trail markers require that the trail markers be constantly checked and maintained and that plant species live forever in the same location in order for booklet and markers to correspond. Either the markers can be eliminated and the booklet revised so that the visitor can easily identify the plant or whatever from the booklet description, or the booklet be eliminated and the markers made more descriptive and vandal proof so that the visitor can hike from point to point and learn about the plant from the marker. There are other alternatives, but the current situation is not flexible enough.

The trail camps as far as I'm concerned are overdeveloped. The average backpacker does not expect to have toilet facilities and picnic tables provided for him along the trail, and the people who camp along the





river in the Edwards Crossing area, even though it is now illegal, do so without these facilities and some have been doing it for years. It is my indication that the people using the area don't expect, need, and many don't want the facilities provided in the trail camps and that the expense and effort involved in developing and maintaining these facilities doesn't justify their existence. If toilets are necessary in the trail camps because of sanitation regulations, these must at least be provided, but getting people to use them is another situation. The two toilets at Edwards Crossing, even though they are necessary here, are not used a great deal, usually only right when people get there or leave the area.

Trail camp locations should be designated but don't really need to be developed to the extent they are now. It is also somewhat ironic that the South Yuba Primitive Camp is developed as it is, and still referred to, as a "primitive" camp. The facilities detract somewhat from the primitive experience.

Another situation which tends to detract from the primitive experience is the mining claim being worked right near the primitive camp. The miner also has a cabin, a garden and a fence around the area located just across the river from the camp, which I'm sure surprises people hiking into the camp as it surprised me. Ironically, the miner working the claim is probably the most legitimate miner I met all summer, because he works hard and actually earns his living from the mining operations. Unfortunately, this operation and his structures are not exactly compatible with recreation and esthetics at a trail camp. It was interesting to learn from the miner that many people hiking down to the area don't camp at the primitive camp but camp somewhere else along the river. He also said that the trail and camp got more use in spring and fall than in summer which may indicate that trail patrol should be done more at those times of the year.

### Hoyt Crossing

One area which is currently not in the designated Recreation Lands area but will have to be watched more closely is the Hoyt Crossing area. To my knowledge, this is the last major concentration of river occupants on public land in the area. The majority of the people are summer residents who occupy several permanent type campsites in this area. However, when I visited the area in late September one guy was building a "home" out of stones and logs and planning on spending the winter. The usual problems with abandoned garbage, abandoned structures and sanitation are results of people living there. The road down to the area - Cement Hill Rd. is in poor condition and not known by many people, and so far, there has not been much complaint and concern over the problems there.





The Hoyt Crossing area will have to be cleaned up in the near future of both the people and garbage. This is especially true as land becomes acquired on each side of public land in the area for the Excelsior Ditch project and as this project gets developed. A possible hindrance in taking action against some of the people in the area could be that it is difficult to determine where the public land boundaries are in the area, and some of the occupants may not be on public land.

#### Recommendations on Future Development and Management

In making future management and development decisions for the South Yuba River area, it must be realized that the primary attraction and recreational resource of the area is the river itself. It is my feeling that people would desire more access to the river but not necessarily more development as far as facilities.

In terms of camping areas, the present proposal for developing campgrounds at Round Mt. and Shields Camp is impractical. The present South Yuba Campground less than a mile from the river ( $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles by road) was only filled two days this summer. It is doubtful that developing campgrounds further away from the river would get even that much use and at the present time use of developed campgrounds in the area does not warrant more development. Even the campground at Malakoff Diggins State Park rarely fills up, primarily only on busy holiday weekends.

If developed campgrounds are developed in the future, I recommend that they be as close to the river as possible, although this could be difficult because of the steepness of the canyon. One area which is a potential site for a campground is in the Hoyt Crossing Area. There are some relatively level spots in this area for development, and improvement of the Cement Hill Rd. could provide adequate access. There may also be some potential for developing a campground on the north side of the river in the Purdon Crossing Area. The road down to the crossing would also need to be improved here. As far as I know, those are the only two possible sites for campground development on the same scale as the South Yuba Campground which could be done near the river due to the terrain and access limitations. Acquisition of land at Purdon Crossing is necessary for development at this site, and it is possible that acquisition of land in other areas may produce other potential campground sites.

In terms of trail camps or primitive camps, more areas will have to be designated along the river for this purpose in the future. This is particularly true as the S. Yuba trail system is extended and is connected with the Excelsior Ditch Trail and if the ultimate goal is achieved of becoming part of a transcontinental trail. Designation of trail camps



at logical intervals will allow individuals to backpack the entire trail length without violating the day use regulations of those areas designated as such. Providing more trail access points and more access to these primitive camps will also tend to disperse use rather than having use congested as is the case at Edwards Crossing. Designation rather than development of trail camps will also allow greater flexibility in their location. More side trails from the rim of the canyon down to the river and main river trail will help to provide this access and this must be accompanied with providing trail parking at the head of each side trail. A likely location for a side trail with trail parking is in the Round Mtn. Area. This side trail has already been started, and providing trail parking and possibly a picnic site here would be more practical and justifiable than developing a campground in this area. If it is practical, a primitive camping area could be designated near the river below Round Mtn. and this could be an acceptable alternative for those people who currently camp along the river in the Edwards Crossing area.

One other area worth mentioning in terms of future development is the area at the end of the dirt road or jeep trail which takes off south from N. Bloomfield Rd. near the center of Section 10 about halfway between S. Yuba Campground and Lake City. In exploring this area one day, I found that it provided the best view of the river canyon and surrounding area that I know of. For this reason, it has potential as a vista point and interpretive point on the river canyon and surrounding area. There is also potential for a picnic site here and possibly trail parking and access to the main S. Yuba Trail by trail.

As far as field personnel for management and patrol in the S. Yuba Area are concerned, it would be much more efficient to set up a trailer in the area for the summer for the recreation patrol person to stay in, or arrange for some type of housing so that a person could be in the area all summer and save time and cost in transportation. I would also recommend that this person be only responsible for the S. Yuba Area and that another roving patrol person be hired to cover the other areas which I also patrolled this past summer. I felt that I was spread too thin, because I had so many areas to cover. I spent most of my time driving and just learning the areas rather than actually doing something in each area and accomplishing some tasks which should be done. More time is necessary for public contact, especially in the S. Yuba Area where it is necessary to hike along the river to contact people. More personnel will be necessary as time goes on and more land is acquired, more facilities developed and the trail system becomes extended in order to provide adequate patrol and maintenance. This personnel should be stationed right in the recreation area, especially during the summer months. It would also be good to supplement patrol on busy weekends such as Fourth of July and Labor Day with other District personnel.



Summary of Use Counts on Public Land  
Summer 1977: June 25, 1977 - Sept. 25, 1977

Note: Vehicle counts were taken in each area below for the number of days indicated as part of routine patrol work. Although an area may have been patrolled more than once on a particular day, only the highest vehicle count encountered on that day appears in the totals. Visitor figures are estimates obtained by multiplying the number of vehicles by a factor of 3.5 - the national standard.

	<u>Area</u>	<u>Vehicles</u>	<u>Visitors</u>	<u>Days</u>	<u>Average No. Vehicles/Day</u>	<u>Average No. Visitors/Day</u>
S. Yuba River Area	Edwards Crossing	1269	4441.5	45	28.2	98.7
	South Yuba Camp & Trail Parking	412	1444	45	9.2	32.1
	Round Mt. Area	13	50.5	18	0.7	2.8
	Hoyt Crossing	20	70	2	10	35
	Red Dog-You Bet	23	80.5	3	7.7	26.7
Middle Fork Cosumnes R.	Rocky Bar Rd.	64	224	8	8	28
	Aukum Rd. Crossing	51	178.5	6	8.5	29.8
Mokelumne River	Electra Rd.-Hwy 49	579	2028.5	11	52.6	184.4
	Ponderosa Way	84	294	8	10.5	36.8
	West Point Power- House Area	41	143.5	2	20.5	71.8
N. Fork American River	Iowa Hill Bridge	89	311.5	3	29.7	103.8
	Shirrtail Canyon- Bunch Canyon Area	16	55	2	8	27.8
	Ponderosa Way	7	24	1	7	24





Edwards Crossing

<u>Date</u>	<u>Vehicles (VE)</u>	<u>Visitors</u>	<u>Days</u>
6/24	38	133	1
6/27	17	59+	1
6/30	20	70	1
7/1	28	98	1
7/2	50	175	1
7/3	100	350	1
7/4	48	168	1
7/9	37	129+	1
7/11	16	56	1
7/15	6	21	1
7/16	42	147	1
7/21	25	87+	1
7/23	37	129+	1
7/24	17	59+	1
7/25	23	80+	1
7/28	21	73+	1
7/29	19	66+	1
7/31	47	164+	1
8/1	14	49	1
8/4	26	91	1
8/5	25	87+	1
8/7	42	147	1
8/11	22	77	1
8/13	25	87+	1
8/14	41	143+	1
8/18	16	56	1
8/20	22	77	1
8/21	61	213+	1
8/25	8	28	1
8/26	9	31+	1
8/27	9	31+	1
8/29	23	80+	1
9/2	23	80+	1
9/3	67	234+	1
9/4	72	252	1
9/5	59	206+	1



Edwards Crossing (Cont'd)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Vehicles (VE)</u>	<u>Visitors</u>	<u>Days</u>
9/9	25	87+	1
9/11	47	164+	1
9/15	3	10+	1
9/16	3	10+	1
9/18	10	35	1
9/19	3	10+	1
9/23	5	17+	1
9/24	7	24+	1
9/25	11	38+	1
Totals	1269 Vehicles	4441+ Visitors	45 Days

Average No. vehicles/day - 28.2

Average No. visitors/day - 98.7



S. Yuba Campground and Trail Parking

<u>Date</u>	<u>Vehicles (VE)</u>	<u>Visitors</u>	<u>Days</u>
6/25	22	77	1
6/27	3	10+	1
6/30	4	16	1
7/1	9	31+	1
7/2	26	91	1
7/3	24	84	1
7/4	9	31+	1
7/9	18	63	1
7/11	7	24+	1
7/15	3	10+	1
7/16	7	24+	1
7/21	5	17+	1
7/23	12	42	1
7/24	11	38+	1
7/25	5	17+	1
7/28	9	31+	1
7/29	5	17+	1
7/31	11	38+	1
8/1	7	24+	1
8/4	6	21	1
8/5	7	24+	1
8/7	8	28	1
8/11	10	35	1
8/13	18	63	1
8/14	9	31+	1
8/18	4	14	1
8/20	10	35	1
8/21	11	38+	1
8/25	9	31+	1
8/26	13	45+	1
8/27	13	45+	1
8/29	8	28	1
9/2	8	28	1
9/3	18	63	1
9/4	15	52+	1
9/5	15	52+	1





S. Yuba Campground and Trail Parking (Cont'd)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Vehicles (VE)</u>	<u>Visitors</u>	<u>Days</u>
9/9	5	17+	1
9/11	7	21+	1
9/15	3	10+	1
9/16	1	3+	1
9/18	1	11	1
9/19	1	3+	1
9/23	3	10+	1
9/24	3	10+	1
9/25	6	21	1
Totals	412 Vehicles	1444 Visitors	45 Days

Average No. Vehicles/Day - 9.2

Average No. Visitors/Day - 32.1



**DRAFT**

AGREEMENT  
South Yuba Trail Project  
(Excelsior Ditch)

**DRAFT**

THIS AGREEMENT entered into this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_, by and between the United States of America, Acting through the State Director, U. S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, hereinafter called BUREAU and the State of California, Department of Parks and Recreation, hereinafter called PARKS.

W I T N E S S E T H

WHEREAS; the California Recreation Trails Act of 1974, was amended to include trails and areas suitable for use by physically handicapped persons; and

WHEREAS; PARKS is authorized to enter into said agreement pursuant to the provisions of Division 5 of the California Public Resources Code; and

WHEREAS; PARKS are to acquire certain parcels of land in support of the South Yuba River Trail Project; and

WHEREAS; there must be an agreement between PARKS and the Federal Government for the development and operation of a trail upon the land to be acquired by PARKS; and

WHEREAS; the agreement must be in existence before PARKS is authorized to expend funds on the purchase price of any real property; and

WHEREAS; the BUREAU desires to locate, construct, reconstruct, use, improve, control and maintain the South Yuba River Trail; and

WHEREAS; the BUREAU must obtain a trail easement from PARKS as authority to expend Federally appropriated money for trail construction, operation and maintenance; and

WHEREAS; PARKS will convey a trail easement to the United States acting through the BUREAU following acquisition of private parcels,

NOW THEREFORE; subject to the availability of funds when expenditures are required, it is mutually agreed by and between the parties hereto as follows:

1. PARKS shall acquire title to all parcels of land as specified by description in Assembly Bill #366.
2. Following joint review by PARKS and BUREAU of said Trail location plan, right-of-way widths, construction standards and specifications, the State of California shall prior to trail construction convey to the United States of America through the Bureau a trail easement in the form attached hereto as Exhibit A.
3. To the extent that topography, location, and construction costs permit, the Trail is to be constructed to a standard over and across PARKS land to accommodate physically handicapped persons.
4. Following construction, the BUREAU shall operate, administer and maintain the Trail.
5. The parties mutually agree to maintain active liaison and cooperation with each other for purposes of providing continued administration, development, operation, use and maintenance of said Trail and in developing from time to time as the need arises, specific detailed agreements regarding trail operation, maintenance and use.



6. The terms and covenants of this agreement shall apply to, bind and inure to the benefit of the successors and assigns of the parties hereto.
7. No modification or cancellation of this agreement shall be binding unless in writing and signed by the parties hereto.
8. Trail construction contracts by the BUREAU will include standard governmental procurement provisions and shall be subject to all applicable Federal governmental regulations.

IN WITNESS THEREOF the parties have executed this instrument upon the date first herein above appearing.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
Department of General Services

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
Bureau of Land Management

By: \_\_\_\_\_

By: \_\_\_\_\_

STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
Department of Parks & Recreation

By: \_\_\_\_\_

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DENVER, CO 80225



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South Yuba River Trail  
recreation land acquisition

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